



For Immediate Release:

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News Release

UDOH Grant Will Help Utahns With Traumatic Brain Injuries

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Utah will use a new \$1 million federal grant to assure underserved Utahns who've suffered a traumatic brain injury (TBI) learn about available community resources. The Utah Department of Health (UDOH), Utah Brain Injury Council (UBIC), and the Coordinating Council for People with Disabilities will work together to administer the grant over the next four years.

The grant from the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services mandates the funds be directed to children ages 0-4 and service members from Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. Particular attention will be given to Hispanic/Latinos and American Indian children who fall within the two groups.

“Each year, nearly 3,000 Utahns sustain brain injuries in falls, car crashes, and sports-related activities,” said Kevin Condra TBI grant coordinator. “Once they're treated and released from the hospital, many are left with serious aftereffects and have no resources to get ongoing treatment or assistance.”

In 2007, 2,688 Utahns sustained a TBI serious enough to result in hospitalization or death. The leading causes of TBIs in Utah were falls (33.3%), motor vehicle crashes (22.9%), and ATV/sports/recreational activities (10.5%). Falls were the leading cause of TBI hospitalizations for Utahns ages 60 and older and children under age four, while Utahns under age 30 had more TBI hospitalizations due to motor vehicle crashes.

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“Utah is fortunate to be one of only three states to receive this grant,” said Jennifer Wright, UBIC Chair. “We are excited about this opportunity to build on our past successes and look forward to the challenges that lie ahead.”

Previously, Utah had been funded to improve a support system for individuals with TBI. Past successes include:

- Conducting a statewide needs and resource assessment in 2007.
- Developing an action plan that guides TBI activities in the state.
- Passing legislation to create a fund to help those without any other available resources.
- Partnering with the Utah Division of Services for People with Disabilities and Utah State University Center for Persons with Disabilities to develop specific TBI training for state agencies seeing clients with a TBI.

One of the new grant projects will be to develop an online virtual resource center that will identify appropriate services for children with a TBI and their families. Other projects will expand Utah’s Medical Home project and give physicians, case managers, medical professionals, and families resources to better identify and treat children with a TBI.

“Utah continues to face many challenges ensuring ongoing access to TBI services for the populations this grant will cover,” said Dr. David Sundwall, UDOH Executive Director. “It is an absolute necessity for state and community agencies to identify individuals with TBI and know where to send them and their families for help,” he said.

For more information on the Utah TBI Partnership Implementation grant, visit <http://health.utah.gov/tbigrant/>.

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